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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3052
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2068
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2188
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0730
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1465
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1823
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2244
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4675
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1334
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000525

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/20/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: SADC ELECTION BRIEFING

REF: HARARE 520

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Tanki Mothae, Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Affairs (SADC Organ) and current head of the SADC observer mission briefed Western diplomats June 20 on SADC's perception of the pre-election environment. He believes that Zimbabwe is failing to comply with SADC election principles; further, the seven days to the election is insufficient to create a proper electoral climate. Mothae continues to raise SADC's concerns with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and with the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ). He is also reporting to the SADC Organ, but does not know how SADC will address what appears to be the impossibility of a credible election. END SUMMARY.

The SADC Mission

¶2. (C) Mothae said there are now 300 SADC observers in Zimbabwe. 100 to 150 additional observers are expected this weekend. There are now six or seven SADC teams in every province. Mothae raised no concerns about resources or logistics. The majority of observers plan to leave on July 2 if the election proceeds "normally." A residue of observers will remain after July 2 to evaluate the post-election environment. If there are serious problems with the election on June 27, more observers may remain.

SADC Challenges and the Environment

¶3. (C) Mothae averred that current conditions do not meet SADC minimal standards for elections:

--The level of violence precludes freedom of association and participation in the electoral process;
--The opposition is unable to campaign as rallies are banned and it has no access to media;
--Opposition leaders, including newly-elected MPs are being arrested;
--SADC observers have been "intimidated." Mothae said this consisted of ZANU-PF supporters in Harare telling observers to leave, and refusal to allow observers to travel to certain rural areas in the provinces.

14. (C) Mothae noted that the Zimbabwean government had a responsibility to preserve law and order and ensure the safety of observers. He had raised these issues with the ZEC.

15. (C) Mothae opined that seven days was not enough time to correct the electoral environment. Zimbabwe had incorporated SADC principles into domestic law, but if it did not comply, what could be done, he asked rhetorically. He said "consultations" were going on within SADC as to how to respond to the current situation.

Observation and the Role of ZESN

16. (C) Mothae said SADC observers would monitor polling stations and would be present for counting at constituency provincial and the main center in Harare. Since the relatively small number of SADC observers precluded a

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presence at most of the over 9,000 polling stations, he believed that the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN) had an important role to play. He was aware that the GOZ had indicated it would accredit only 500 observers--ZESN had indicated it was prepared to field over 10,000 observers--and he had raised the issue with the United Nations. He also planned to raise it with Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa. He noted that the SADC principles call for full participation of nationals in their election process.

Keeping Tabs on Tendai Biti

17. (C) Mothae was asked about the arrest and continuing detention of MDC secretary-general Tendai Biti. He replied that SADC and its Heads of State had consulted on the issue and, because of the political context, were carefully monitoring developments. Mothae said SADC was also concerned about other MDC MPs who had been arrested.

GOZ Election Preparations

18. (C) Mothae said the ZEC had informed him it was ready for the election. It had trained officials (some who were beaten or intimidated are understandably not participating for this election and are being replaced), and had completed necessary logistics such as the printing of ballots. According to Mothae, SADC had offered financial and logistical help for the election to the GOZ; there was no response.

COMMENT

19. (C) As in his conversation with the Ambassador (REF), Mothae indicated he was well aware of the situation on the ground. He does not believe a credible election can take place, but neither he nor SADC know how to respond to the situation. At some point, however, SADC will need to take an official and public position. END COMMENT.

Warren